



Press Release



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Judiciary Committee
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For Immediate Release:
March 10, 2005

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Rep. Conyers Joins Rep. Markey in Call For End To Torture Outsourcing
Demands End To Administration's War on Human Rights

Congressman John Conyers, Jr issued the following statement today at a press conference to demand an end to the Bush Administration's practice of 'outsourcing torture' through extraordinary rendition, the practice sending prisoners to countries than are known human rights abusers.

In the wake of press reports confirming that the White House has authorized the CIA to hand over prisoners to other countries for interrogation, including countries known to routinely practice torture, Representatives Conyers joined Rep. Markey and other Members have introducing the "Torture Outsourcing Prevention Act" (HR 952) that would prevent the practice of sending prisoners to countries that are known human rights abusers:

" I join Rep. Markey and others to protest what should be treated as a horrible disgrace to our country but has become the cornerstone of our anti-terrorism policy. The CIA whisking people off in the middle of the night to a Middle Eastern country used to be the stuff movies were made of, but now has become a horrible reality.

A conversation that started about whether stacking naked men in a pyramid was inhumane has turned into an explanation of how boiling another human being's hand is good interrogation technique. For those who said "What's the big deal?" when the Abu Ghraib scandal broke, I say this is the big deal. This is what happens when an otherwise civilized society begins down the slippery slope of justifying the degradation of other human beings.

In fact, the only thing more horrible than what each one of these rendered persons experience at the hands of their tortures, is that our government is now arguing that the practice is good intelligence policy, within the law, and won't be stopped any time soon.

This refusal to admit a horrible mistake - characteristic of the Bush Administration -- is belied by the fact that they are now trying to hide the evidence. When I asked the Inspector General of the Homeland Security Department to investigate how Mr. Maher Arar was rendered to be tortured in Syria for 10 months, he immediate undertook the task. I am sorry to report that his investigation has been thwarted by uncooperative employees who have refused to turn over documentation of Mr. Arar's rendition or even to speak of his case. The Justice Department is now taking unprecedented measures to seal Mr. Arar's civil case under the rare "state's secrets" privilege.

For all of our prestige in the world, our most esteemed position used to be leadership in human rights. We cannot let that be thrown away by an Administration that survives only through its terrorism policy and the justifications it spins for that policy.

If the Administration will not voluntarily choose the side of human rights, we as the Congress will. We must immediately conduct hearings on the known rendition cases and investigate further how extensively this practice has been used. And we must immediately pass legislation to make sure that intentionally sending someone off to be tortured by a third party has no part in our war on terror. Truly, we must end this war on human rights".